THE SWORD INTERVAL

BY BEN FLEUTER

Fall Barros, you say?
You sought me out only to appraise me of one of my victims?

A victim you placed a powerful ward upon.

Hah.
Did I now?

Tell me, what has Fall been up to these last... has truly been ten years?
Is she well?
Ms. Barros was placed under the protection of Atlas after the incident between yourself and her parents.

"Protection", Atlas calls it.
They claim to be guardians, but are no more than jailors.

The
poor girl.

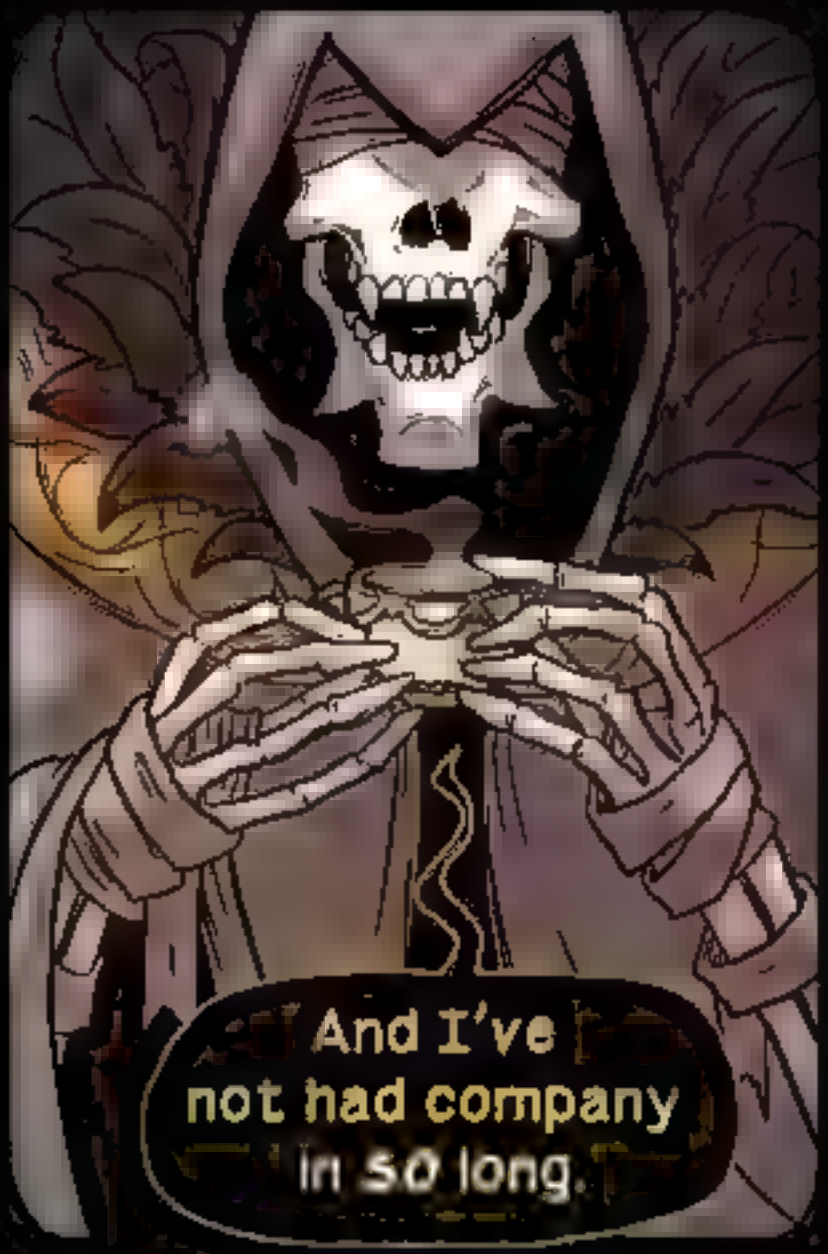
Oh, no thank you.

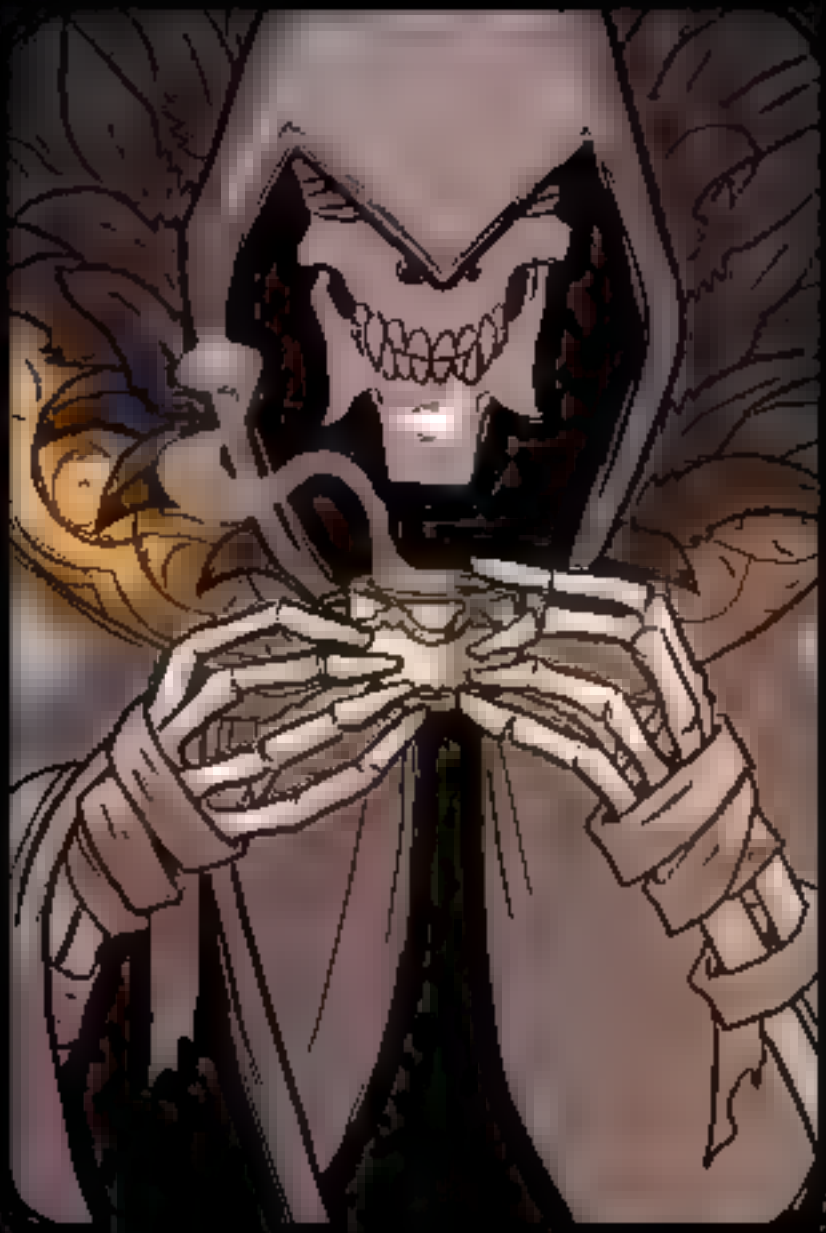
Young lady, the tea is neither poisonous nor supernatural.

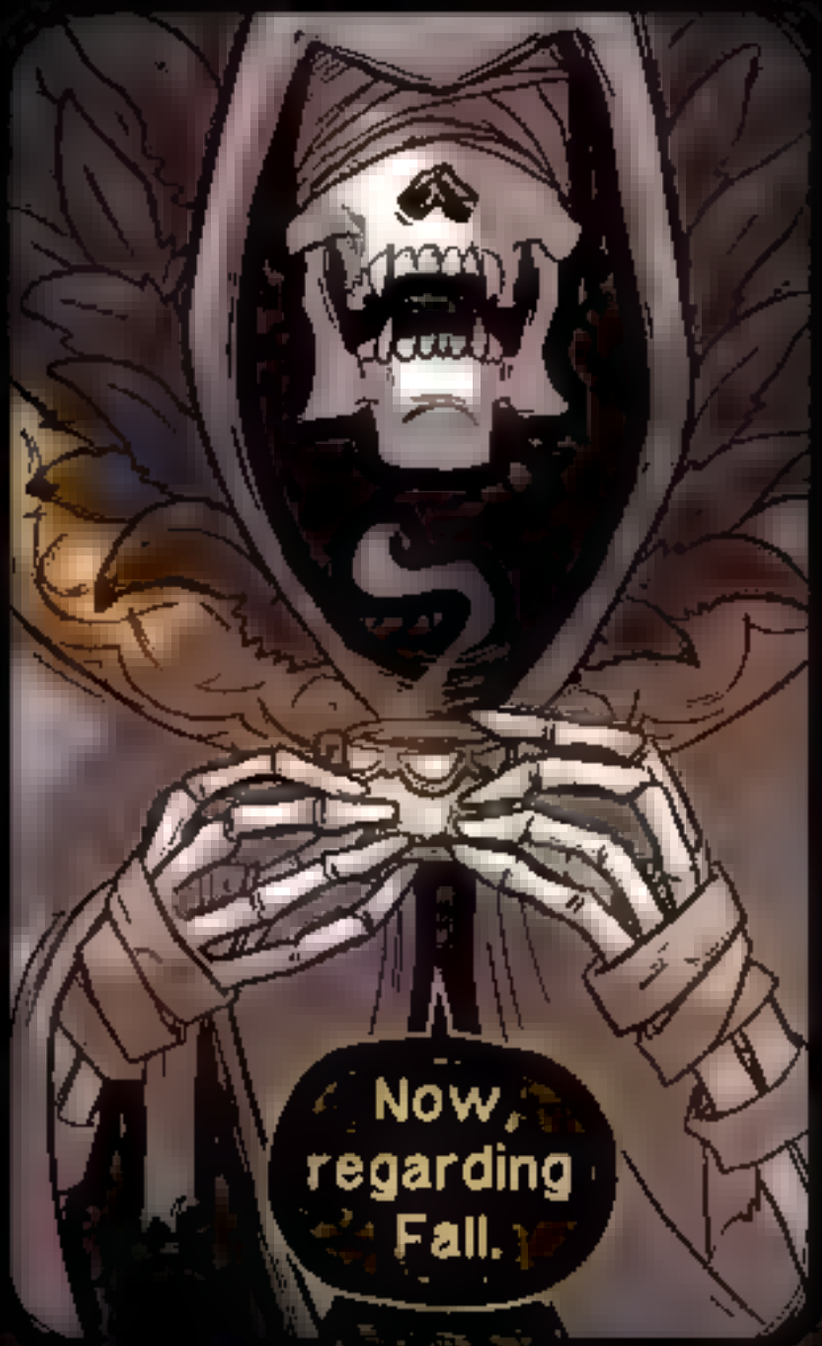
I will not harm a guest that I have welcomed into my home.

If I may ask, is that a law for your form of undeath?

A law? No, no. It's simply *polite*, my dear.


And I've
not had company
in so long.




Now, regarding Fall.

Ms. Barros has seen fit to leave Atlas's witness protection program and pursue a career as a hunter.
She's named you as her mark, Hierophant.

She has? Hah! Good for her!
I had been concerned she would have succumbed to atrophy.

Yet after a decade she remains... alive. There is a fire in her.

That... does these old bones good to hear.